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ROTH BURY

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1955

Richard Short, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S.Ed.,
L.R.F.P.S(G), D.P.H.,
Area Executive Medical Officer,
Area Health Office,
Wagonway Road,
ALNWICK.

J.N. Oliver, M.S.I.A.,
Surveyor/Sanitary Inspector,
Council Offices,
ROTHBURY.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

1955.

To the Chairman and Members of the Rothbury Rural District Council:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1955.

My appointment in June, 1955, was in succession to Dr. R. Armstrong, who kindly acted as Medical Officer of Health on a temporary basis during 1954 and the first half of 1955. I am grateful to him for the help and information he has given me.

The population in the district fell by 20 during the year, from 5580 in 1954 to 5560. There was, however, a slight rise in births, the number registered being 71 compared with 69 in the previous year; but the rate of 12.76 is below the national average of 15 per 1,000 population.

The stillbirth rate also compares unfavourable with the rate for England and Wales, the rates being 40.54 per 1,000 live and stillbirths and 23.2 respectively.

To continue this rather doleful sequence, the infant mortality rate of 42.25 per 1,000 live births must be related to the national rate of 24.9. Causes of infant mortality are shown in Table 4. It is noteworthy that 2 out of the 3 infant deaths occurred among illegitimate babies.

Deaths in the population totalled 69 giving a rate of 12.41 per 1,000 population, a decrease of 1 death over the 1954 figure. It is interesting to note that the 2 cases of male cancer were due to lung neoplasms.

Infectious diseases were once more benign in character, the chief offenders being measles and whooping cough. Measles attacked mainly the 5 to 9 age group and was most prevalent in Rothbury, Thropton and Longframlington districts.

Tuberculosis accounted for one death, and during the year, 3 cases were notified, representing a drop of 8 cases from the preceding year.

During the year, it was my unpleasant duty to take action under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, 1948, as amended 1951. Shortly after my appointment, the case of an old lady living in insanitary conditions and in need of care and attention, was referred to me. When visited, she was found lying in a dirty bed, the mattress wet with urine, in a dark corner of the living room. The house was filthy, the carpets matted and greasy and the fire and hearth full of ashes. The old lady was deaf; her eyesight failing. She refused welfare accommodation and an attempt was made to improve conditions by using home helps. This action proved unsuccessful and finally, when the patient became bed-ridden and in urgent need of hospital attention, a magistrate's order was obtained, which was extended on application to the Magistrates Court on 17th November, 1955.

This recount of the state of the public health in the district, with the exception of infectious diseases, may not be so pleasing or alluring as the popular conception of vital statistics, but the three dimensions Live Birth Rate, Stillbirth and Infant Mortality Rates, together with registered deaths, are as vital to the community as the shapely figures of our ladies. It is an index of the progress we are making in local welfare and this report indicates a need for more effort in the field of Maternal and Child Welfare.

It is my pleasure to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their courtesy and assistance throughout part of my first year of office and also to express my appreciation of the loyal and kindly support I have received from Mr. J. Oliver, Surveyor/Sanitary Inspector.

I am,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

RICHARD SHORT.
Medical Officer of Health.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

The area of the district is 167,186 acres.

The number of inhabited houses is 2030.

The rateable value is £61,743, and the sum represented by a penny rate is £225.

The estimated mid-year population is 5560 and this figure is taken when calculating the Birth and Death rates.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Live Births:

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	36	28	64
Illegitimate	3	4	7
Totals:	39	32	71

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the population is 12.76

Still Births:

Legitimate	-	2	2
Illegitimate	1	-	1
Totals:	1	2	3

Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total live births and stillbirths 40.54

Deaths:

Male	Female	Total
33	36	69

Death Rate per 1,000 of the population 12.41

Deaths from Puerperal Sepsis .. .. Nil
Deaths from Other Puerperal Causes .. Nil

Death Rate of Infants under one year:

All infants (per 1,000 live births) .. 42.25
Legitimate infants (per 1,000 legitimate births) 13.70
Illegitimate infants (per 1,000 illegitimate births) .. 40.05

Deaths from Cancer 12
Measles .. .. Nil
Whooping Cough .. .. .. Nil
Diarrhoea .. .. Nil

Table 1.

CHIEF CAUSES OF DEATH.

	Male	Female	Total
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	-	1	1
Tuberculosis (Other)	-	-	-
Syphilitic Disease	-	-	-
Diphtheria	-	-	-
Whooping Cough	-	-	-
Meningococcal Infections	-	-	-
Acute Poliomyelitis	-	-	-
Measles	-	-	-
Other infective and parastic diseases	-	-	-
Malignant neoplasm - stomach	-	2	2
- lung, bronchus	2	-	2
- breast	-	2	2
- uterus	-	-	-
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	5	1	6
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
Diabetes	-	-	-
Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System	6	5	11
Coronary disease, angina	5	5	10
Hypertension with heart disease	1	-	1
Other Heart Disease	3	6	9
Other Circulatory disease	2	1	3
Influenza	-	-	-
Pneumonia	1	2	3
Bronchitis	-	2	2
Other diseases of respiratory system	-	-	-
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	-	1
Gastritis, enteritis, diarrhoea	-	-	-
Nephritis, nephrosis	1	2	3
Hyperplasia of prostate	-	-	-
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	-	-
Congenital malformations	-	1	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	4	5	9
Motor vehicle accidents	1	-	1
All other accidents	-	-	-
Suicide	1	1	2
Homicide and Operations of War	-	-	-
Totals:	33	36	69

Table 2.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Scarlet Fever	1	Dysentery	9
Whooping Cough	18	Puerperal Pyrexia	-
Diphtheria	-	Smallpox	-
Measles	63	Paratyphoid Fever	-
Pneumonia	8	Enteric Fever	-
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	-	Erysipelas	1
Acute Poliomyelitis	-	Food Poisoning	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-		

Table 3.

TUBERCULOSIS

	Respiratory	Other
Aged 15	1	-
28	-	1
40	1	-
	2	1

Table 4.

Causes of Infant Mortality, 1955.

Cause of Death	Confined	Within 24 hours	3 weeks
Prematurity	Hospital	1	-
Asphyxia Neonatorum	Hospital	1	-
Meningitis and meningocele	Hospital	-	1

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SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT, 1955.

WATER SUPPLY:

All supplies under the direct control of the Council have again been satisfactory.

The Hepple scheme was completed in October, and the village at long last enjoys a plentiful supply.

The elevated storage tank to supply the village of Longframlington was completed and brought into service in August. Unfortunately, the boring operations on Shirlawhope for the Alnwick Rural District Council, affected our spring and it was found necessary to use some of the borehole water to augment our supply.

No major extension to our mains has been made except for the above two schemes.

The Council supply approximately 65% of the population.

SEWERAGE:

No change has been made during the year. The Whittingham and Longframlington schemes are still awaiting a starting date from the Ministry of Housing and Social Government.

HOUSING:

No Council houses were completed and occupied during the year but 7 were built by private persons.

A survey was made during the year and an interim report under the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, showed that 43 houses were suitable for action under Section 11 and should be demolished within 5 years.

37 applications for assistance towards improvements under the Housing Act, 1949, were received during the year and 36 approved. Since the inception of the scheme, 146 applications have been approved.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 & 1948.

Part 1 of the Act.

1. INSPECTIONS for purpose of provisions as to health.

Premises	Number on Register	Inspections	Number of Written Notices	Number of Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Secs. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6, are to be enforced by the Local Authority.	1	1	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	18	18	-	-
(iii) Other premises in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Out-Workers' premises).	3	3	-	-
Totals:	22	22	-	-

2. CASES in which defects were found - NIL

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